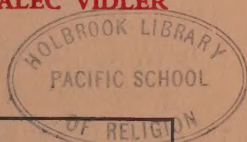


THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER



NOVEMBER 1950

Vol. I No. II

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THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE
COMMON LIFE

Vol. I. No. 11.

NOVEMBER 1950

Notes of the Month

COMPARING recent "unofficial strikes" with the trade disputes before the first and second world wars, anyone with a long enough memory can see a marked change in the attitude of the public towards such events. In the earlier struggles there was usually a substantial body of public opinion sympathetically disposed towards the strikers, including a considerable section of middle class opinion. Not much of this remains evident. In the old days an outbreak of industrial discontent unloosed a flood of publicity about the conditions and wages of the strikers, which were generally recognized as glaringly unjust in contrast with those of other social classes and were often revealed as inhumanly inadequate. Since then the lot of the worker has been bettered in both respects; and though demands for improvement may be justified, they make a less dramatic appeal to sympathy. Moreover the public feels its own interests more widely involved. Formerly it was taken for granted that higher wages could be paid by simply reducing the profits of the owners, then so much less heavily taxed: whereas a rise in the wages of any one section of the workers now presents itself, especially if the industry is nationalized, as an addition to costs and prices which will have to be paid by everyone else. As before, the

public bear the immediate inconvenience. If it is a stoppage of transport, they have to waste time in queues or stifle in crowded compartments ; if it is of gas, they may have cold comfort at meals or in rooms, which may be also without light. The hardships imposed by the latest unofficial strikes may have been less widespread and prolonged than in some of the great industrial battles fought by the larger unions ; but those were exciting and raised public controversy ; these are not so interesting and cause more public irritation. For all these reasons, there is some danger that public opinion might harden against industrial "rebels" to the point of demanding or at least permitting heavy-footed government action.

Are Unofficial Strikes Immoral ?

Extreme action is unlikely, however, so long as we keep our sense of proportion ; for the fact is that industrial harmony has greatly improved during the last two decades. The much-publicized stoppages since 1945 have amounted to far less loss of the nation's working time per annum than was commonly lost by strikes in pre-socialist times.¹ They are not imperilling society economically ; but many good people think that unofficial strikes show a cynical defiance of law and a scandalous disregard of their pledged word on the part of the men. On the other hand, the moral case against such unofficial stoppages, which once looked strong enough, has been gradually weakened by the developments of Trade Unionism and of the circumstances in which it operates. The ordinary member of one of the larger unions, which he is actually or virtually compelled to join but whose meetings may not interest him enough to make

¹ The average number of working days *per annum* lost in Great Britain and Northern Ireland through industrial strikes and lock-outs, may be indicated as follows :—

Annual average from 1921-1930	31,025,100
" " " 1931-1938	3,005,375
In the year 1949	1,807,000

him attend them, knows well enough that he is legally bound by the terms the union has arranged. But he does not feel morally bound by them, and it would strain the skill of a moral casuist to prove that he is. In many cases (for unions are very diverse in constitution) the executive officers of his union are almost as remote from a man's daily life and interests as are Cabinet Ministers or heads of Government Departments: and the local secretary of his trade-union branch only appears to him as their agent. The chief officials are often not elected but appointed; there are some who have never been members of the union in which they become officials. No doubt all the highest executive officers are striving conscientiously to serve their members' interests; but in the case of the larger unions their relations with the rank-and-file are of necessity too impersonal and obligatory to carry much moral authority. There are of course unions to which these remarks apply hardly or not at all; but such unions are usually free from unofficial strikes. The "gigantism" that has developed in some others is a very real problem; it does undermine the individual worker's respect for the contractual obligations entered into in his name.

The Price of Liberty

No one ought seriously to wish either strikes or lock-outs to be made impossible. The right of the worker to withhold his labour and of the employer to decide whether or not to employ, are both essential to social freedom. Any alternative arrangement that we can imagine involves some kind of slavery. The industrial age made it necessary for workers to combine in unions and employers in associations, but the terms of employment were still decided by their mutual negotiation, for in any healthy and progressive society they must be. Freedom is the prior condition of all—including economic—values. There is no other way of finding out the economic value of a product or of the effort needed to produce it, except by that free consent to co-operate which

implies the possibility of a refusal, and upon occasion causes an actual deadlock. One of our troubles is that some deadlocks are more than society can afford in this technical age, when the scale of operations and the size of the co-operating bodies is so enormous. A huge apparatus of governmental and other tribunals, boards and committees of conciliation, has to be organized to prevent stoppages of work that would be too dangerous to the life of society : and bodies of this kind have done magnificent work in recent times, work which has been increasingly effective. But they are now being baffled by an accentuation of tension, not between capital and labour but between the interests of skilled and unskilled workers—the so-called “differential”. This is at the bottom of nearly all the recent outbreaks of labour trouble.

“The Differential”

The difficulty is more psychological than economic. In its now challenging form it arises from the new conditions of the Welfare State. The largely successful effort to abolish poverty has incidentally brought the wages of the less skilled and the more skilled worker much closer together. The standard wages of an engine driver, for example, used to be always half again as much as a stoker's : but at the present higher rates the driver's remuneration may not exceed his mate's by as much as a pound a week. The tendency is the same in every trade ; and skilled men, who are as willing as anyone else to see poverty abolished, nevertheless insist upon the restoration, at least in part, of their own preferential claims. This was the root trouble with the “maintenance men” in the North London gas strike ; and the lock-out of London compositors last month was a refusal of their illegal claim for their own differential rate over the raised minimum rates of their assistants. Here, as in every trade to-day, men who used to be called labourers are called by other names and draw pay-packets nearly equal to those of the artisans whose skill is the essence of the

operations in hand. In not a few cases the unskilled man on piece-work or overtime actually goes home with the more money. Nor is it at all easy to restore what the skilled worker naturally feels, and may resent, as a set-back in his relative status. The different classes of workers are not in the same unions, but if the skilled men put in a claim for a higher rate it is promptly followed by a corresponding demand from the union of the unskilled ; and on the ground that this will occur, the claim of the skilled is likely to be refused. When the London Master Printers lately refused such a claim from the Compositors, the latter tried to come to an agreement with the Unions of their assistants. But from these they received the rather dusty answer that the unskilled would always want and expect 90 per cent. of the craftsmen's rates. Against this, the skilled men protest that "craft must pay its way, and must be entitled to a much bigger proportion of the wages bill".

What is Really at Stake ?

As this problem is peculiarly modern and is the chief industrial irritant of the day, the scant attention it gets in the press is surprising. At each new outbreak, leading articles emphasize the dangers of rising costs and of inflation ; they condemn increases of pay, but make a gracious exception in the case of the lower-paid worker. They cannot of course be meaning to recommend as a cure for the strike an additional dose of what causes it ; so there must be either a good deal of ignorance of the real situation or a politic reluctance to have it widely discussed. It may be calculated that the brew will settle better if it is not stirred—that in the end the skilled workers will get used to the new situation. Problems do exist about which the less said the better. The levelling-up of wage rates is part and parcel of the friendly conception of the Welfare State, which has been more or less clearly endorsed by every body of responsible opinion in the country, and it makes demands upon the patience of other classes besides skilled artisans.

This humanitarian aim has been furthered by a pressure of social thought which owes much, directly or indirectly, to Christian groups and individuals. But it is disturbing and unlooked for that we should find ourselves invoking the law and calling upon the Navy and Army to force such an issue against a section of the workers.

Educational Implications

Evidently the widespread grievance we have mentioned, whatever importance or unimportance we may attach to it, will not just clear up by wishful thinking. There is a case for rather more open discussion and sympathetic attention than it has received. There may be some social values at stake, and not only the sectional interests and professional pride of the workers are concerned. For example, do we yet know the effect upon the young, the potential pupils and apprentices of skilled industries? Will the knowledge of the new conditions affect their willingness to be bound to long apprenticeships, to put in spare-time studies and qualify for skilled jobs, if their differential value is cut so fine; or will they prefer to take their freedom and have a more care-free youth, feeling it will make no great difference to future prospects anyway? It is too soon for us to have statistical evidence on this point, and by the time such evidence is available any mischief it might indicate would have become irreparable. The diminution of any skilled class would very likely be more than the nation can afford: and it would be a doubtful compensation to keep up the numbers of a skilled craft by deterioration in the quality—which would follow if, for instance, the numbers were kept up by relaxing the standard of competence and the disciplines necessary to attain it. It is true that the skills in which there is most resistance to reduction of “differential” are not of the highest order. They are what may be called routine skills—type-setting for printing, and the driving and maintenance of engines are obvious examples—in which the operations required of the worker are not very varied,

though training and experience enables him to perform them with a high degree of perfection. There are higher skills, wisdoms and creative functions, certainly, on which the progress and even survival of a modern state may depend in this age of technique. But the routine skills are equally indispensable to maintain the fabric of a civilized world. Civilization depends upon a variety and hierarchy of material skills and technical disciplines, and if these actually cost more and more "socially-necessary effort" to acquire, is it sensible to crowd the needs of the middle-class technician out of existence? We may do it out of a charitable concern for the "bottom dog" but if we cherish him at the expense of the next-to-bottom dog, it will not be accounted to us as virtue. Indeed, in a society which accords very substantial differential rewards to the skills it reckons higher still, it may rather be set down to hypocrisy.

Full Employment and Social Opportunity

The argument over "differentials" is a cross-current in the much wider drift of social change produced by welfare legislation and its corollary full employment. Lord Beveridge made it clear from the start of this great social experiment that success would be conditional upon the country's being able to have always a few more jobs open than there were applicants for; a condition that has been pretty well fulfilled. Over the field of labour as a whole, however, full employment has increased the opportunities for manual workers to move up into businesses or professions that are "higher" by existing social standards. There has been a massive migration from the more laborious and exposed occupations to the more sheltered—which does not necessarily mean a corresponding will and ability to qualify for the latter; existing circumstances have rendered this less obligatory. The consequent "undermanning" of some of the basic industries that demand sustained physical exertion is well recognized as a new social danger; the rates of pay for such work have been increased more here than

anywhere else, in the hope of maintaining and increasing the supply of labour. But beyond a point the incentive of money by itself seems to lose its effect. Many have urged that the cure is to accord a higher "social prestige" to these occupations. But to alter the consciousness of social status in the most laborious trades really implies far-reaching changes throughout the rest of society. That is a spiritual aspiration, or a long-term aim, and we are in danger—quite apart from Communism—of being forced against time into some mere rough-and-ready solution.

The Human Problem

The resistance of skilled labour to "reduced differentials" is thus a symptom that may demand of the Christian social thinker some closer definition of his attitude towards equality, both social and material, and to other forces which are inherent in the progress of socialism and civilization. Some of our readers, we hope, may have more to say of this in our pages. Our aim in discussing reduced differentials is to call attention to a question that is widely ignored outside the circles immediately affected. (While we were preparing these notes, the Conservative Party Conference gave the matter some publicity, for good tactical reasons, but the problem is obviously too deep to be solved by a return to traditional differentials, and its solution would present the same difficulties to either party.) The workers concerned might, in time, be forced to accept the situation, since their grievance rouses little general sympathy. After all, the higher-income groups of society, excepting a few with special opportunities, have all had to accept reductions in differential advantage; so why should not the skilled workers? But few have to accept a relative reduction that is so tangible in day-to-day experience, as this of the artisan class. There may be something behind their reaction besides a merely selfish jealousy for their traditional privilege. At least, we should do well to try to understand what has happened when the 'buses stop, the gas goes out or the

weekly journal cannot be printed. Those who have suddenly withheld their skilled service are our near neighbours ; and a closer view of the causes of their exasperation would show us how human it is, and how well we can understand it.

INTERIM

A perceptive allusion to the present ecumenical situation was made by a leader-writer in *The Times*, in the course of some comments upon a very different matter—the annual conference of the Labour Party at Margate on October 2nd :—

“ The conference meets to-day . . . to discuss how best to preserve and assert the party’s political identity within the national front into which electoral accident, world necessity and the common sense of the party’s leaders have brought it. . . . The desire of the party is not to question or repudiate the national obligations of the Labour Government ; it is rather to make sure that, in discharging these obligations, the Government do not make themselves indistinguishable from the Conservative Opposition.

“ The dilemma is by no means unique. It can be seen to-day in a very different sphere of human aspiration. The common and world-wide menace of Communism is pressing together the Churches of the world in self-defence, but at the same time they are moved to insist more than ever upon their fundamental doctrinal differences.”

* * * *

“ Counter-currents ”

Not only the menace of communism, but the more general threat of atheistic nihilism has been forcing the Churches into coalition. The movement also springs from a positive urge within, not only from response to something outside. Nevertheless *The Times*’ observation is true and significant. It is worth remembering, not only in connection with the mutual remonstrances lately exchanged between leaders of great churches but in assessing certain symptoms within the

ecumenical movement. We noted one of these in reference to the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Toronto last July ; some of its conclusions had to be framed with a fresh regard to the expressed inability of some of the member churches to recognize others as being authentic churches at all. And in the Council's latest Annual Report, the General Secretary observes that since the World Council has become " a factor in ecclesiastical life, and the ecumenical movement is no longer merely an aspiration but a substantial reality, there appear certain reactions and counter-currents ". What the Report calls a " slowing-up of the approaches to organic union " is not at all astonishing after the strenuous and even adventurous co-operation of recent years. No one should suppose on that account that the relations between the Churches have not entered upon a new phase of growth.

* * * *

The Palestinian Refugees

The last number of *The Frontier*, devoted chiefly to Palestine, attracted appreciative comments but some justified criticism for having contained only a brief reference to the plight of the Arab refugees. *The Frontier* will give special attention to this at an early opportunity, for it is a social problem as great in extent and perhaps hardly less momentous for the future than the Jewish migration that caused it. The population displaced numbered nearly a million and included persons from all classes, many of whom had been advised to leave during the fighting and did so without any expectation of permanent exile. Most of them continued to believe that some way would be found to send them home again, and the sadness of hopes deferred often sapped their will to face a new life elsewhere. Whilst hundreds of thousands are still dependent on the relief voted by the United Nations, far-reaching schemes of public work such as forestry and roadmaking are being planned and begun ; but most of the refugees are still destitute, and the immense burden of administering relief rests upon far too few devoted workers, many of them from the missions, the Red Cross, the Quakers and other religious bodies. Thanks to these labours, the absorption of Palestinian refugees into the new State of Jordan is now proceeding fairly well, and it would go on faster yet if more small capital equipment could be provided to set up workers in small crafts and businesses. Some refugees own

considerable capital now "frozen" in Banks in Israel. Perhaps not only in Jordan, but also elsewhere and much further East, this great migration will in the end have considerable social effects, for the refugees carry with them a better education and knowledge of a more modern way of life. On a long view, there are reasonable hopes: but in the camps the energy of the relief workers is still (as one of them wrote) "being drained in the endless fight against depression and misery".

According to a recent report, the number of refugees actually receiving rations under the UNWRA organization has been reduced to about 600,000 from about 900,000, but the contemplated Works projects have so far provided employment for no more than 5,000 persons, which, allowing for five dependents per head, takes about 25,000 off relief. Most of the employment provided is also of a temporary character. On the other hand, the birth rate among the refugees is about 20,900 per year.

Mr. Kennedy, Director of UNWRA, in his report to the United Nations at Lake Success of June 15th, 1950, appealed for the help of private charities, for the very large number of Palestinians who, though not technically refugees and not entitled to rations because still occupying their homes, are almost destitute. He stated, "We realize that religious and private voluntary groups have been active in the work of providing for the needy long before the United Nations undertook the burden, and that these groups will remain long after we (the Agency) are gone. I wish publicly to acknowledge our appreciation of their work, and plead for its continuation and extension."

* * * *

Charities in the Welfare State

The effect of the Welfare State upon alms-giving will take some time to estimate at all accurately. The vicar of Bolsover, writing lately in *The Times* about the relief fund opened on behalf of the victims of the Creswell colliery disaster, reports something of the present public attitude towards such charitable efforts. He seems to have found a fairly prevalent idea that the nationalization of the industry in which the disaster occurred made any private relief unnecessary, or indeed undesirable. The public authority alone was responsible. If this way of thinking is widespread it may account for the almost total failure of the fund that was launched in this country, under the very highest political and religious auspices, in aid of the

Palestinian refugees ; the public may have regarded their rescue as a responsibility of U.N.O., which it needed no help to discharge, and should not be given the slightest excuse to side-step. As the vicar rightly says, "It will be a sad day for this country when people can compound with the State for all practical expressions of charity." On the other hand, there is no gainsaying the fact that the abolition of destitution, well on the way to achievement in Britain, relieves individuals of what used to be the most continually obvious and needed exercise of the third theological virtue ; we fill the poor-box willy-nilly by taxation. It is to be hoped that Christmas at any rate will remain a time for the exercise of the traditional kind of charitable giving : and a very suitable object for a Christmas donation this year would be the Bishop in Jerusalem's Appeal on behalf of the Arab Refugees. The address is c/o The Jerusalem and the East Mission, 12 Warwick Square, London, S.W. 1. Gifts of clothing may be sent via the Church Missionary Society.

* * * *

Frontier Council in Conference

The Christian Frontier Council recently held its annual conference at High Leigh. In addition to members of the Council, about twenty-five guests were present. These included Dr. H. H. Walz, the World Council of Churches' Secretary for Lay Activities, and Professor Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, author of *The Christian Future*, etc., who was happily able to be in England just at that time. The general subject of the conference was "The Nature of Man", and discussions were opened by Professor C. A. Coulson, F.R.S., of King's College, London, Mr. Martin Wight, of the London School of Economics, and Mr. L. John Edwards, M.P. At a service on the Sunday morning an address was given by Dr. J. H. Oldham, which will be published in the December issue of *The Frontier*.

THE NEW COSMOLOGY

THERE has never been any age in the history of man when he has not been interested in cosmology. There is nothing wrong or unnatural with this preoccupation, since the sun, moon, and stars form part of our earliest experiences and demand some sort of interpretation. Furthermore, whatever interpretation we may provide must be one acceptable to the best scientific convictions of our time. In the year 1000 B.C. when David was on the throne of Israel, "considering the Heavens", and drawing his own deductions about the status of man, current science supposed that each star represented a window, cut out of the blue orb of heaven, and illuminated at night by a candle, that the angels might more easily behold the doings of man. This will not do to-day: indeed the basic situation is completely reversed. For whereas in former days the scientific view had to conform with some prior religious metaphysic, now the religious significance (if any) of the observations of the astronomers must be conditioned by whatever interpretation the astronomers themselves have given to them.

To accept this limitation—which is one of the hardest disciplines for the fundamentalist—is not to "give the game away". It is to assert that all truth is one, so that the Heavens, and not only the Bible, declare the glory of God. It is to claim the help of the astronomer in interpreting the ways of God to men and to believe, with Roger Bacon, that the aim of Natural Science is "to assist the Church in her work of evangelizing mankind by leading the mind through scientific truth to the contemplation of the Creator".

We may also anticipate that in such "conversation" as that whose necessity we have just stressed, the law of action and reaction will operate. It will not only be the Christian who "has to think twice" before dogmatizing. One reason for the wide appeal of Eddington and Jeans was that they recognized this interplay and, though in very different ways,

linked God and the astronomers, or showed that the nature of the Physical World went beyond what was often called physics.

More recently the issue has been opened up again. First in his broadcast talks on the Third Programme (which have since been reproduced in the Home Service) and by their publication in book form,¹ Fred Hoyle, of Cambridge, has addressed himself to what he calls the New Cosmology and its significance for human faith and destiny. There is some justification for the title, since in the last twenty years an almost unbelievable progress has been made in our knowledge of the planets and the stars. No longer "are we small boys at the holes of a circus tent, struggling to get even an imperfect peep at the great show, but we have ringside seats". And what is more, it *is* a great show. The birth and death of the sun, the immensity of space, the unending procession of galaxies, the process of atomic combustion which maintains the internal heat of the stars, the possibility that matter is continuously being created out of nothing, these are indeed staggering. None of those who have read Hoyle's book will feel inclined to doubt his claim that "man's unguided imagination could never have chanced on such a structure. No literary genius could have invented a story one-hundredth part as fantastic as the sober facts that have been unearthed by astronomical science". It is not surprising that 26,000 copies of the book were sold within a few weeks: nor that there are bound to be repercussions affecting the Christian exposition.

Some of these repercussions are worth considering in some detail. For example, there is the age of the earth. Recent evidence from half a dozen distinct lines of attack all appear to converge on an age of about four thousand million years for the sun, and rather less, perhaps three thousand million years, for the earth. It is astonishing how precise the figures are, yet they seem to fit practically all the

¹ F. Hoyle, *The Nature of the Universe*, Blackwell, Oxford., 1950. 5/-.

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—EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE—

evidence available to test them. No Christian need worry about this: he may indeed take comfort from the fact that there does seem to have been a beginning. Nor need he be greatly troubled about the manner of the earth's origin, now regarded as one bit of débris from the immense holocaust which accompanied the explosion of a companion star to our sun.

But there are other matters in which a Christian will be more concerned. Until recently it was generally supposed that our little planet—or as Jeans put it, our little “speck in the infinitude of time and space”—was the only one on which human life could exist. Christians were wont to speak of the great experiment which God was trying out on our earth. There was a uniqueness, a rarity, about us that fitted well with the psalmist's “Thou madest him but little lower than the angels”, and which lent some sort of credence to the doctrine that God sent His only Son into the world. But what if there are more worlds, with human life akin to ours? The odds seem now to be in favour of it, though of course that is no proof. A rough calculation suggests that even in our own galaxy there may be a million planetary systems on which the physical conditions are suitable for the maintenance of life. (And this says nothing about all the other hundred million galaxies outside our own.) Furthermore, physicists like Bernal and biochemists like Darlington have been investigating what we may call the physical basis of life: their conclusions are that, given the correct physical conditions, such as temperature, light, moisture and chemical composition of the rocks, then life, even of an advanced form, is highly probable. It may emerge soon, or it may emerge late, but eventually chance will bring together the necessary components first for an atmosphere, then for a protein molecule and so for a cellular organism. The problem which is not solved in this way is whether such organisms could develop into human beings: but it is by no means inconceivable, and such creatures may (at least in principle) be within the limits of radio communica-

tion with ourselves. Does the vision of St. Paul—to sum up all things in Christ—refer to them? These, and a heap of other questions cannot be answered yet, but one day they may have to be.

In certain other respects there is a more immediate contact with Christian belief. It is one of the astonishing conclusions to which the New Cosmology has led, that material is continuously being created. This material, in the form of atoms of hydrogen, appears “from nowhere” throughout the whole universe. As Sir Edmund Whittaker² observed in a broadcast, until recently there has been a doctrine of creation in theology, but not in science. Such a doctrine does now exist in science, and its arrival may be regarded with some satisfaction as partly removing one more bone of contention between the scientist and the Christian. For if matter can be created in this way, the status of miracles, though not established scientifically, is at least made more plausible.

All this is very thrilling to learn about, but in one sense it is the least significant for us of what Mr. Hoyle has to say. What is most significant are the passages in which he reflects on the influence of these new views on ordinary life and on the propriety of religious faith. In much of what he says here, Mr. Hoyle is in fact echoing the sentiments of a good deal of non-Christian scientific opinion. In the first place he believes that a recognition of the insignificant size of this earth in comparison with the vastnesses of the whole Universe, will be “a new idea, as powerful as any in history . . . which will have the effect of exposing the futility of nationalistic strife”. He is in good company here, for G. M. Trevelyan has recently expressed the view that the influence of science was the main cause of the decline of sectarian hatred, and the decay of religious persecution, since it “familiarized the educated mind with the idea of an unalterable law in the Universe, which somehow made

² Published in *The Listener*, June 1st, 1950.

sectarian dogmatism look foolish". Yet Christians will want to warn against what is a dangerous over-simplification. For, as Pascal knew, the great vast silences of the stars can frighten us, and fear is not a very good prophylactic against war, as every armaments race makes abundantly clear. It all depends on the attitude with which one approaches the situation: which is only another way of saying that metaphysical beliefs, and presuppositions, play a large part in conditioning our responses, whether scientific, aesthetic or philosophical.

There are plenty of these presuppositions scattered about in most scientific writing, and Mr. Hoyle provides no exception. Perhaps the most impressive is the assumption that laws found to be valid on the earth in the twentieth century are also equally valid throughout the whole Universe and for all time. The business man, using the figures of sales returns for the past few years, tentatively estimates his prospects for the next twelve months. Such caution is a garment that ill fits the present day astrophysicist. What he sees in his telescopes are the colours of some faint stars, and the number of them: what he infers is that the sun is still tolerably young, with a prospective life of some fifty thousand million years, but that after about one-fifth of these years it will have become too hot for human life to continue on the earth. If these figures seem at first to be in the nature of a guess then listen to Mr. Hoyle saying that "what is important about these time estimates of the astrophysicist is not that the results are staggering beyond belief, but that they are quite definite and precise—more precise than anything we know about the history of man if you go back more than a few thousand years". Such hair-raising extrapolations may be right, but as Professor Bridgman of Harvard, himself a distinguished physicist and Nobel Prize winner, has said, one can only take them seriously if "one subscribes to a metaphysics that claims that laws of necessarily mathematical precision really control the actual physical universe". And Professor Dingle of London

University has reminded us that we are asked to swallow ideas "beside which that of the fundamentalist theologians seems child's play". This does not justify the fundamentalist any more than it disproves Mr. Hoyle: but it does suggest the need for a certain humility, and a willingness to examine the character of one's own presuppositions.

However, there is something more serious. For Mr. Hoyle is no fool, yet his knowledge of religion and the convictions by which the Christian sustains his faith is almost puerile. Where is the origin of this ignorance? Why is the whole corpus of Christian reasoning and apologetics so completely unknown to so many scientists, that they can judge our faith by the same standards that they apply to the cosmological picture described in Genesis? How does it come about that the Christian doctrine of Heaven seems to Mr. Hoyle as merely "an eternity of frustration", tempting him to suggest, with a most touching naiveté, that he would prefer a mere three hundred years of life on earth? Why, as Sir Edmund Whittaker says, is he so ignorant of the doctrine of the Beatific Vision that he must suppose Heaven to be furnished with alarm clocks, and enquire in what activity we Christians propose that eternity should be spent? (Even his own scientific standards desert him when he has to quote from Handel's "Messiah": "although I die, yet in my flesh shall I see God", without either going to the original or troubling to discover what present research suggests that it was intended to mean.) The knocking down of Aunt Sallies is a cheap trick of which we should like to acquit Mr. Hoyle. But the price of the acquittal is twofold; first the plain statement that a good many scientists have a blind spot, or emotional antagonism, where religion is concerned, and cheerfully wear the most obvious blinkers; second, the painful admission that Christian apologists have made their case so badly that it does not force itself on the consideration of intelligent men and women. Whether this is the fault of the theologian, for his frequent dullness, his lack of appreciation of the

scientist and his work, his often unrecognized presuppositions and his failure to see the honest sceptic as he really is, cannot yet be said. Probably all of these explanations hold some part of the truth. But the disaster which results is clear enough in what Dr. Raven has called the failure to interpret man's science and man's religion in terms that are not only mutually intelligible, but also mutually dependent. So far are we yet from mutual dependence that we have not got even to mutual intelligibility. Anyone who reads this story of the Universe, and comes at the end to these naïve notions of man's place in the great economy, will long for some restatement of the Christian tradition that will have within it the authenticity of true faith and the synthetic quality of a *Summum Theologiae*. Such a desperate need will almost certainly have to be met in the scientific field by an inspired layman, just as in the literary field it has called forth laymen like T. S. Eliot, Dorothy Sayers and Graham Greene.

There are several places where such people might drive in the thin edge of the wedge. When Mr. Hoyle asks: why is the Universe here at all? his reply is that "at present we have no clue", for we live "in this wholly fantastic Universe with scarcely a clue as to whether our existence has any real significance". Here, surely, is a chance to speak, not of the "Unknown God whom ye worship in ignorance", but of those personal relationships within which man's fulfilment, conditioned by his physical environment and made more splendid by the very discoveries of science, may be found; and from which he may be led to see, in the words of Max Planck, one of the greatest of the architects of twentieth-century physics, that "religion and natural science are fighting a joint battle . . . against scepticism and against dogmatism, against disbelief and against superstition, and the rallying cry in this crusade has always been, and always will be: 'on to God'."

There is hope in all this: it was Hoyle himself who wrote that "when by patient enquiry we learn the answer to any

problem, we always find, both as a whole and in detail, that the answer thus revealed is finer in concept and design than anything we could have arrived at by a random guess". To the Christian this is profoundly true: and he will be tempted to remind Mr. Hoyle that his discovery "that one's own consciousness is not enough" [enough for what?]; and that moreover he "would choose an evolution of life whereby the essence of each one of us becomes welded together into some vastly larger and more potent structure", represents a tiny glimpse of what the Christian calls the Communion of Saints and the Church as the Body of Christ. Here is a "dynamic evolution more in keeping with the grandeur of the physical universe" than anything that ever entered Mr. Hoyle's philosophy. It is not, as Hoyle would like, that "a writer should share the consciousness of Shakespeare, a musician that of Beethoven or Mozart, a mathematician that of Gauss": it is that we are one with *all* the great men of the earth, including Saints, Prophets, and Martyrs, and that we all attain to a full-grown man, and the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. How *can* we make this known? Without it, a man may understand the birth and death of the sun and stars, but still be "without the smallest clue to our own fate"; with it, this quite incredible Universe takes on a sacramental garment, the natural being woven into the supernatural, and the scientists and the theologians become partners in the most thrilling of all explorations, in which the Heavens are seen to declare the Glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork.

C. A. COULSON.

THE VINDICATION OF HOPE

READING books, like listening to sermons—even good books and good sermons—is a process which often leaves one saying to oneself, “Excellent, a profound and moving experience, but was it not perhaps a trifle too long?” The surpassing merit of Professor Baillie’s new book is most vividly brought home, to me at all events, by the fact that I put it down with a disappointed feeling that the experience had been much too short. Its discussions are so brilliant and insightful that its omissions are not merely tantalizing but disappointing. He has dealt so well with so much that the reader is left confident that he could have dealt equally well with rather more, and thus have made his book an even better one, not indeed more lucid and profound, but possessed of a certain completeness, the lack of which is its one present defect.

In particular I feel that in giving us a critical account of the various theories of social development Professor Baillie should not have confined his attention, as he comes near to doing, to philosophers of history like Hegel and Croce, but discussed more fully the work of modern sociologists like Hobhouse, Weber, Pareto and Sorokin. Comte is the only thinker usually reckoned a sociologist of whose views he attempts any adequate account, and although it is true that he stood somewhere about the point at which the speculative philosophy of history began to transform itself into modern empirical sociology, the inventor of the term “sociology” is himself more a social philosopher than a sociologist.

Nevertheless in a discussion of so good a book it is churlish in the extreme to concentrate on what the author has not given us when in fact he has given us so much. The last twenty years or so have witnessed the publication of a considerable number of books revolving round the theme of the relation between Christianity and the interpretation of the historical process. This must rank as one of the very

best of them. Often they have been the work of visionary and prophetic thinkers, like Berdyaev, Tillich and Lampert. Their writings have abounded in flashing insights which stimulate and great prophetic climaxes which stir the reader, sometimes to the depth of his being, but they rarely leave behind them in his mind any really clear intellectual picture. By contrast Professor Baillie's calmer, more judicial and lucid book belongs to the great tradition of Western rational theology. It is a fine critical discussion, a discriminating comparative analysis of doctrines culminating in a cogent intellectual reaffirmation. The reader feels that St. Thomas Aquinas and Calvin would approve, although Luther perhaps might feel the lack of something which he himself was wont to demand and supply. But the book will seem lacking in passion only to those who have not divined that the intellectual craving for profound apprehension and lucid communication is itself a passion of a dominating and decisive character.

During the last two and a half centuries the doctrine of progress has come more and more to play the part of a substitute for religion in irreligious thought, while religious thinkers have sometimes adopted it as a rational articulation and analysis of the meaning of that providential ordering of the affairs of this world by God in which Christians had previously believed but, lacking the concept of progress, in a somewhat confused and clumsy fashion. But the idea of progress no longer has the authority which it once possessed. Strong currents in contemporary irreligious and religious thought alike are now running against it. In this as in other spheres the Christian thinker, after so long opposing the basic dogmas of secularism during their period of authority and power, may find himself, perhaps to his surprise, called upon to come to their aid in their hour of weakness. In what sense is progress not a false doctrine but a Christian heresy? In other words, to what extent are its ultimate roots in the Christian intellectual tradition? What is the comparative worth of the various forms in which it



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has found expression? How much of it can survive the critical scrutiny of the Christian mind? And how much of it can by this means be salvaged and reaffirmed within the context of the Church's proclamation of the gospel in and to this perplexed twentieth-century world? These are questions which occur irresistibly to any mind that ponders at all upon such matters, and we are fortunate indeed in finding such a book as this to help us answer them.

To many people, however, the significant thing seems not so much the decline of the prestige of the doctrine of progress in the twentieth century, but rather the extent to which the doctrine survives, particularly as an emotional symbol employed in patriotic and political exhortation, despite the barbarism and cruelty of two world wars and the unparalleled horrors of modern religious, racial and ideological persecution. Why have not experiences such as these broken the popular faith in progress altogether? To doubt or disbelieve in progress is still upon the whole a comparatively sophisticated mental process. To many of our contemporaries progress remains not only a "good thing", but also something that must necessarily be going on in some obscure way even at a time when the course of events seems outwardly to be set in quite another direction.

The bourbon-like inability of the really convinced progressive either to learn from experience or to forget his dogmas emphasizes a truth which Baillie makes clear at the very outset of his analysis—the *a priori* character of the idea of progress. The concept is not a conclusion resulting from an inductive study of the facts of history, but rather a category in the Kantian sense, a way of experiencing history in terms of which it lives for us as a significant whole. To the earnest progressive the idea of progress is the indispensable presupposition of his faith in the meaning and worthwhileness of life. I recollect speaking rather sceptically and irreverently about progress to a group of A.E.G.M. clergymen some years ago. When I had finished a rather ageing and frail modernist pathetically complained that if he lost

his faith in progress he would have no grounds left him for believing in God! Baillie points out that the facts usually adduced to confirm the progressivist thesis, the cumulative character of technical development, were quite familiar to those classical writers whose attitude towards the future was one not merely of prevailing but rather of all-pervading gloom. Thus Lucretius employs the actual word (speaking of men *pedetentim progredientes*), and yet he can interpret this as a process which substitutes the "soft man" of civilization for the vigorous and healthy savage, and carries life out into the deep waters and stirs up the billows of war. A similar recognition of the plain fact of technical development, combined with a pessimistic outlook on the present and future of secular society, can be found in writers as distinct from each other as Seneca and St. Augustine. It is thus clear that progress is not a conclusion to which the facts lead us, but rather a particular way of experiencing the facts, a dogmatic preconception read into the facts as a means of making them significant in terms of each other as and when they occur.

It is noticeable that progressivist thinkers have devised many different ways of elaborating and defending their thesis. There are in fact several distinct doctrines of progress, having no more in common with each other than the general idea that progress is going on. Thus the eighteenth century thinkers based their belief on a humanistic confidence in the natural commonsense of men and the benevolence of nature—which could dispose even human egotism to beneficent ends—and an optimistic faith in the irreversibility and finality of what they called the "enlightenment". The Hegelians and the Marxists, on the other hand, based their arguments upon imposing metaphysical interpretations of the cosmos and the dialectic of human existence. After Darwin progress became a synonym for evolution once it has reached the self-conscious and recorded stage of human life and history. The earlier sociologists were evolutionists, and even to-day phrases like "the evolution of society"

are by no means unknown. But at least from the time of Huxley's famous *Romanes Lecture* it began to be doubted whether biological evolution and human progress were really either synonymous or even continuous with each other. Ethnology and sociology in the twentieth century have moved away from evolutionism and developed a conception of social development which sees in it a process quite distinct in its essential nature from that of biological evolution. In brief, evolution is a slow process which operates on the physical level by transforming the structure and biological character of the individual members of the species. Social development is by comparison a rapid process which transforms the conditions of life of an unchanged species by accumulating its cultural successes and innovations. Man is fundamentally a different kind of being from his sub-human ancestors, precisely because he has evolved from them. But civilized man is still fundamentally the same kind of being as the savage, because between the two there stretches not a process of physical evolution but merely one of social development. Social development is thus more rapid than physical evolution, but also more precarious because so easily reversed. Man cannot by taking thought become again amoeba or even ape, but by taking the wrong kind of thought, or no thought at all, civilized man swiftly reverts to the savage, a more terrible savage indeed, the technified savage who has made our century perhaps the bloodiest and cruellest in human history. So long as we confuse social development with physical evolution we are concealing from ourselves one of the salient and distinguishing characteristics of the human condition. The savage is not somewhere centuries behind us, a mere phase of our remote history. The savage still lives inside every one of us. Indeed, civilization may be defined as a series of elaborate and fragile devices for keeping him inside and never permitting him to escape. Once we have ceased to evolve and begun to develop we cease also to leave our past behind us and begin carrying it about with us wherever we

go. I have dwelt a little upon this distinction because it is perhaps, as I have already hinted, the one important aspect of the matter which Professor Baillie neglects. He indeed employs the term development, and contrasts it with evolution, but he gives it the sense which it bore for the speculative German philosophers of history and their successors rather than that which it has acquired for modern sociologists.

Nor do all progressivists necessarily hold that evolution or development is a generalized characteristic of all reality, or even of all history and society. The biologist knows that not all species have evolved. Man may derive ultimately from amoeba, but amoeba is still with us. Similarly not all societies develop. Some stand still for centuries. Others may even regress to more rudimentary forms. We even know of primitive peoples who literally camp out among the ruins of great cities built by their more civilized ancestors. Progress may not be a general law of all history and society but rather the particular opportunity and privilege of particular peoples at particularly favourable moments of their development. This is the form of the doctrine of progress most familiar and most influential in contemporary thought.

Progress, according to this view, is not so much a cosmic energy imminent in and expressing itself through all human history, but rather the exceptional opportunity, privilege and achievement of the scientific age. It is not man but scientific man who is big with unmeasured potentialities and bright already with the reflected glory of a golden future. It is not man but science which will progress, and man can hope to share that progress only by making himself the pliant and resourceful agent and instrument of that beneficent process.

This is of course only a new way of reformulating, in the language and in terms of the optimistic faith of what has come to call itself a scientific age, the ancient observation that man has a tendency to accumulate, refine and develop the techniques and arts of life which he makes instrumental to the maintenance and improvement of his physical existence. As we have seen, ancient writers observed this

process going on and yet remained profoundly pessimistic in their attitude towards the future. In our own age we have, of course, watched this kind of progress taking place much more quickly, and we have witnessed the invention and use of technical expedients which display an effectiveness and efficiency of which the ancient world never even dreamed. Nevertheless our thinkers are more and more coming up against the same difficulty as that which disillusioned the classical writers. Like them we see no sign of any ethical and spiritual progress either bound up or running parallel with technical progress, which without ethical and religious control may curse as easily and lightly as it may bless. Henry Buckle, a century ago, could argue optimistically that it was intellectual and not moral progress which really matters to mankind. In his view what we call moral progress is a function or by-product of intellectual progress. Lecky took a very similar view. But their shallow optimism is impossible for the twentieth century thinker. Science does its work and both justifies and fulfils itself simply by being science. We have no right to expect that it should do more. To suppose that it might become a saviour of souls or a purifier of consciences was and remains not only ridiculous but positively unfair.

Nevertheless, this idea that progress is the unique characteristic and product of a scientific age, although it bears some resemblance to the views of the classical writers, has its real roots in the Christian tradition, and particularly in St. Augustine. Strangely enough Professor Baillie is less successful in the interpretation and representation of St. Augustine's doctrine of history than he is with several other writers with whom he must be considerably less in sympathy. What Augustine was feeling after in *The City of God* was nothing less than a vast synthesis of the two distinct and opposed ways of experiencing and interpreting history with which he was acquainted. For the classical authors to whose guidance he had at first entrusted himself human history is something that goes round and round, never getting

anywhere except where it was before; but in the biblical writers to whom he had turned for salvation human history is a going on and on, from the beginning of the world through the great world-saving and world-shattering crisis of the Incarnation to the mysterious consummation of the ages in which all time shall culminate. It was not the purpose of Augustine in *The City of God* to reject the one and affirm the other. On the contrary he finds in both views an aspect or measure of the truth. He sees something in history which indeed goes round and round (the "City of Man" or secular history) and at the same time he sees other elements in the historical process which, he is equally certain, are going on and on (the "City of God" or sacred history). For Augustine evidence of progress is found not in the accumulative character of man's technical development but in these processes of spiritual development which may be observed in the biblical writings and in the rise and spread of Christianity. For him it is the Gospel of God which is the progressive thing, big with its illimitable future.

Not a few of the most recent studies of comparative history point in very much the same direction. Toynbee is indeed the modern Augustine who in a not wholly unsimilar time is putting before the world a very similar thesis. In order to interpret human history we require not one set of laws but two contrasting sets. The wheels of the bicycle indeed go round and round but the cyclist above them goes on and on. In both Augustine and Toynbee the cycles of secular civilization are justified by their essential relationship to the spiritual development which uses and rides upon them.

Professor Baillie, using a slightly but only slightly different route, arrives at the same conclusion. The concern of the Christian thinker is not merely to refute the modern belief in progress. It would be a paradox indeed if Christian thought and criticism were to concentrate their energies upon reinstating the classical hopelessness and gloom. It is no part of the gospel that man has nothing to hope for!

Nevertheless it may be part of the gospel that men have prevalently sinned against hope, and unwittingly prepared the way for the coming of disillusion and despair, by obstinately insisting on hoping for the wrong things. The authentic Christian hope and confidence is the hope for the triumph of the Kingdom of God, the confidence that the very stars in their courses are fighting and working with and beside all those who fight and work for the Kingdom of God. The secularized hope which has called itself belief in progress is a Christian thing in the sense that only in what had been Christendom could it establish so firm a grip upon the hearts of men. In other words it is a Christian heresy and not a false doctrine. The way of Christian thought with the heretic is not to break his faith in what he sees but to improve his vision, not to produce a situation in which the confuted heretic no longer believes even in his heresy but rather to lead him gently step by step from the narrowness and fanaticism of heresy to the breadth and charity of orthodoxy. (Only, of course, we ourselves must learn to become very orthodox indeed before we can hope with much success to guide the footsteps of a fellowman along such a path. It will take more than the penny catechism, or even the *Summa Theologica*, to work in most of us so redeeming an intellectual transformation as this.)

But this transference of hope and confidence from the secular to the spiritual may easily, as a man with such vivid human sympathies as Professor Baillie is fully aware, provoke the exasperated cry that such a hope is not really a human hope at all, that man being man as he is must hope for more than the triumph of the spiritual if his hope is to be anything more than a rather desperate sublimation of despair. Professor Baillie rather amusingly imagines the votaries of progress putting down his book and exclaiming, "What is this alternative that you offer us? It is a hope for the success of an evangelistic campaign and above all, it would seem, for the progressive success of foreign missions". There is indeed not only a possible but also an important

rejoinder to this not unnatural protest, and in the last dozen pages or so of his book Professor Baillie permits himself no more than a bare indication of the intellectual direction in which that answer is to be found. The spiritual is never purely, or barely, or merely the spiritual. It is characteristic of Biblical and Christian spirituality that it has, in a course of a historical development which has done much to characterize and express its inner nature, taken, moulded and transformed certain specific types of secular activity which have become part and parcel of its total tradition. We may think, for example, of science as an intellectual possibility which has its roots in the Christian conception of nature as created and contingent, and of welfare techniques and democratic politics as twin expressions of the Christian attitude towards man, a being who both requires mercy and exercises responsibility at the same time. Since the Renaissance so much that is in fact specifically Christian has mistaken itself for the naturally human and secular, feeding upon the great Renaissance myth of a reaction from the Christian to the classical, and everywhere failing to perceive the extent to which the characteristic themes of modern man's solicitude and hope are part and parcel of the total Christian experience and achievement. The scientific scrutiny of the works of God to match and stimulate and parallel the theological study of his Word, social techniques which sacramentally express the Christian reverence for mercy and charity as the supremely necessary and sovereign social attitudes, political structures which embody the conviction that even a sinful child of God has an inalienable dignity and bears about with him a burden of freedom and responsibility, which, because God gave it, man dare not take away: these things are essentially products of the Christian tradition. There is every sign that apart from Christianity there is little chance of their surviving. They are not in fact secular at all, but rather, as the secular progressivist has misinterpreted and misperceived them, disjointed fragments of the spiritual. The Christian's con-

fidence and hope in the future embraces these things also, because for him they belong to Christianity and form an integral part of the spiritual and intellectual empire of Christ. Reinterpreted as such an expression of the immense and inexhaustible riches of Christ, what the progressivists have hoped for and believed in may validly, the Christian would say, be hoped for and believed in still, provided always that those who affirm and delight in the conclusions will drop their perverse habit of trying to deny and denigrate the premises at the same time.

J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY.

THE PLACE OF SCIENCE IN HUMAN LIFE

“MANY people have been led to think that the procedure of natural science is the royal road to truth in every field, and that what cannot be proved by science cannot be true. This faith in science and its general applicability is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Western civilization in our time.” This statement, which appears on p. 6 of *The Power and Limits of Science* (by E. F. Caldin. Chapman and Hall, 1949. 12s. 6d.), will appeal to any reader of *The Frontier*; it represents Mr. Caldin's starting-point and indicates the scope of his book. He begins with an analysis of the “procedure of natural science”; goes on to discuss the relation of scientific truth to other species of truth; and concludes with an estimate of the place of science in human life.

Mr. Caldin's approach is most rewarding. Rather than attempt to give a generalized account of scientific method, illustrated from various branches of science and confused by the very great variety of its manifestations, he has picked out one pair of sciences, physics and chemistry, analysed

their method in detail, and then explored the status of their conclusions in relation to the broad river of human thought. He brings out very clearly and carefully the stages in the growth of a scientific theory and the importance of a pre-conceived belief in an order in nature. "An experimental law is not in general a bare summary of the experimental data. . . . We pre-suppose that there is a general law . . . and that all we have to do is to find it by examining a few typical states" (pp. 16, 17). He goes on, however, to insist that this pre-supposition must come from a source outside science. Historically I am sure this is true; but in the twentieth century I would say that the constant daily experience of the success of the physical sciences—in the electric light or the gas-cooker, for example—gives quite sufficient sanction for the belief; which can in short be both a pre-supposition and a conclusion of science. To miss this point would be to under-rate the strength of the scientific humanist's case for the man whose intellectual training has been dominated by science.

This criticism does not, however, detract from the validity of Mr. Caldin's general account of the inductive method, and he makes some very important points: that science is concerned essentially with the rules governing successions of events; that the idea of causation is not involved in the laws of science; and that it is "extravagant and quite without basis" to say that Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty implies a "breakdown of causality". Thus "the theory of induction lends no colour to the view that science rules out miracles as impossible" (p. 58). Possibly this last point might profitably have been developed further. If our increasingly middle-class society remains civilized, it seems likely, as Mr. C. S. Lewis has pointed out, to subscribe to some vague Highest-Common-Factor religion which embodies its better values and ideals, rather than take seriously a God at whose breath the heavens might dissolve in smoke. The relation of science to miracles is an important topic for such a philosophical issue.

On the limits of Science, perhaps Mr. Caldin's most significant thesis is the simple-sounding idea that every study has its own characteristic subject-matter, its own point of view, and its own method. Any study or species of knowledge by virtue of its special point of view excludes certain aspects of human experience. Science, for example, is not concerned with unique events, such as the battle of Waterloo or the death of Charles I, in the way that History is. Nor is it concerned with the experience of knowing a man as a human person: a scientist can measure John Smith's pulse-rate, his reaction-time, and so on; but his experience of John Smith as a man is something quite distinct. The purpose and point of view of a study require a characteristic method. "One of the most urgent needs of contemporary intellectual life," as Mr. Caldin says on p. 178, "is a clear understanding of the relations and differences between the methods of natural science, mathematics, philosophy, history, literature and theology." He himself sketches out the kind of analysis he is recommending in his section on "Metaphysics and Science". Here he gives an Aristotelean exposition of "change" and "causality", and contrasts it with the scientific conceptions. Personally I find this section rather unsatisfying; chiefly perhaps on account of Mr. Caldin's Thomist background: he uses a jargon, i.e. a technical phraseology, which is likely to blunt his impact on those who are not Roman Catholics. This is not to say that the writing is obscure or over-abstract; on the contrary Mr. Caldin's style is usually simple and lucid. But in certain parts the framework of interpretation involves assumptions which are not clarified, or even stated; as, for example, when he speaks of the "perfection" of a human being. We can see further examples in the chapters on "Beauty and Science" and "Ethics and Science": the conclusions will appeal to the converted but the argument will not persuade the unconverted. However, Mr. Caldin does not claim to have given an adequate account of the matter.

Mr. Caldin concludes his exposition with a chapter on the social functions of science, which contains many fresh and penetrating observations. Here, however, I feel that the special experience and qualifications which make the earlier part of the book so clear and persuasive, let Mr. Caldin down: he is a physical and not a social scientist. As he himself quite rightly states (p. 168): "Our fundamental problem is to recover a full view of the nature, situation and destiny of man; to rebuild the half-ruined ideals of our civilization." Contemporary society is marked by profound moral confusion: people are uncertain about what values are most important; and they are even more uncertain about what moral sanctions are valid. Those who try to sort out the contradictions discover that their own training and experience are too narrow for them to be able to assimilate the many opposing points of view and reach a fair judgment. If we look for the causes of this predicament, in the development of European civilization since 1600, we can trace at least three factors at work.

In the first place there has been the direct influence of science on our thought: the idea of evolution, for example, has profoundly influenced our interpretation of human history and human nature. In the second place, the technological changes fathered by science have led to far-reaching modifications of our way of living: for example, the scale of all human communities (apart from the family) has increased enormously beyond anything known before, and this development has in itself fostered important changes in our attitude to life. It is certainly possible to trace connections by these two routes between the growth of science and the moral confusion of the twentieth century. In the third place, however, we have to recognize that European civilization before 1600 showed stages of growth comparable to those revealed by other youthful civilizations, and it may be expected therefore to have maintained a momentum towards changes not unlike theirs. The cynicism and irresponsibility of the present time may consequently be attributed

not to the influence of science but to some quality inherent in human societies.

The major problem stated by Mr. Caldin then implies at least three questions : (a) the place of science in our intellectual interpretation of life, in the picture we build of the way the universe works. (b) The relation between, on the one hand, the conditions of life in a technological civilization and, on the other, Christian moral practice and spiritual discipline. This is to a considerable extent a sociological problem ; it is significant that one of the outstanding attempts to deal with it was made by a Christian who paid great attention to sociological thought, namely Abbé Godin. (c) The third problem involved is the relation of moral confusion and cynicism to the development of human societies unaffected by science. This question too has a strong sociological bias ; it is significant that historians who have made the most important contributions to its understanding are those, like Toynbee, who are concerned to frame general laws of the development of human societies : a sociological objective.

The first of these questions is of course of very great importance, and it is the one that Mr. Caldin is mainly concerned with. But it is also extremely important that Christians should recognize the significance of the human sciences in the understanding of the other two questions, and the great contributions therefore that science can make to the burning moral problems of the twentieth century. Mr. Caldin's book has done an essential job ; we now await a writer who will more fully explore the peculiar power and limits of the social sciences.

K. G. COLLIER.

REVIEWS

Theologia Germanica. Victor Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

Lovers of the mystics have long lamented the difficulty of getting their works in English, for so many of them have now been out of print for so long. Especially has this lack been felt in the field of that very important fourteenth century movement which centres round the names of Eckhart, Tauler and Suso. Due praise must therefore be given to the enterprise of the present publishers in making it possible once more to have the *Theologia Germanica* in English. It is over forty years since the fourth edition of the famous translation by Miss Winkworth was issued in the old Golden Treasury series.

It was indeed an heroic attempt of those great men of the movement called the Friends of God, to bring a breath of life into the terribly corrupt and disordered religious scene of the fourteenth century. It is "from one of the nameless members of this group", says Miss Evelyn Underhill, "that there comes the literary jewel of the movement, the beautiful treatise called the *Theologia Germanica*, one of the most successful of many attempts to make mystic principles available for common men". This little book, so strangely anonymous, has been thought by some to be a compilation at secondhand of the colloquies of some master of the mystic craft. But, disjointed and unmethodical as it is, it bears the strong mark of a single mind and a very forceful one too. It is of course, like so many of the medieval treatises, rooted and grounded in what the present editor calls the "insipid brew" and "stale water" of the Pseudo-Dionysius. Nevertheless like our own English *Cloud of Unknowing* it is infused throughout with an inspired ethical content. Some of its master sayings have passed into the main stream of Christian devotional utterance, e.g.: "I would fain be to the Eternal Goodness what his own hand is to a man," or "Nothing burns in hell but self-will". Or again there are those hammer blows repeated so often, the denunciations of everything that is concerned with the "I, me, mine".

Something must be said of the introduction by Joseph Bernhart, a German Catholic theologian, which forms about a half of the whole book; half of the introduction is occupied by the editor's learned exposition of the nature of mysticism in general. Herr Bernhart with true German thoroughness fairly boxes the compass, for he begins with extracts from Chinese and Persian mystics and after a long voyage

through the Middle Ages fetches up with a short appreciation, mostly in quotation from other writers. Finally he bids us "look up and listen to the note of that old and ponderous bell". Most readers will judge however that whatever ponderosity there is in the volume is not found in the main text. The book itself is admirably produced and the short notes at the end are excellent. It may seem ungenerous to add that if the book had been issued with a short introduction, giving just what the general reader ought to know about the background of the text, it could have been published at a considerably cheaper price. J. D.

Existentialism and Christian Thought. By ROGER TROISFONTAINES, S.J.

Translation and Introduction by MARTIN JARRETT-KERR, C.R.
(A. and C. Black. 4s. 6d.)

This little book appeared in Belgium four years ago, when those desperadoes of the spirit, the Existentialists, appeared to be more important than perhaps they were. In the present reaction, however, it is easy to underestimate the human significance of a movement, much of which was a sincerely agonized effort to get religion without God. Father Troisfontaines' is a scrupulously fair, comprehensive study of the leading motives in this variegated philosophical outburst. To entertain with sympathy the questions that torment the mind of the age, to re-state them better, and show how they should be answered in the charity of the Gospel—this is a time-honoured method of Christian teaching; and this book is a fine example of it. [Ed.]

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

EDUCATION IN PALESTINE

Dear Sirs,

As one who was intimately connected with the work of the Diocesan Secondary Schools in Palestine during the Mandate, I have read with considerable interest, Mr. Baly's article on the "Future of Christian Education in Palestine" in the October number of *The Frontier*.

In his appraisal of the results achieved by the "Mixed Schools", as the Peel Commission called them, Mr. Baly says "Our failure was that whereas on the one hand such (joint) education would be quite impossible without the quiet that our Schools provided, we never


managed to find any way to produce the quiet than by deliberately keeping the bitterness outside and by banning politics ”.

This may have been true of the Diocesan Boys' School, but it was certainly never true of the two large schools for Girls, where Jew and Arab mixed in very considerable numbers, the English High School at Haifa, and the Jerusalem Girls' College. The reality of the friendships made there between Jew and Arab, and the spirit of understanding and tolerance engendered was, I believe, largely due to the fact that there was never any attempt to place restriction upon discussion of political and religious matters amongst the pupils.

Yours sincerely,

MABEL C. WARBURTON.

Former Principal of the Jerusalem Girls' College.



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